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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was the relationship between campus-based child care services at the State University of New York (SUNY) community colleges and the academic success of student-parents. Academic success was defined as completion of a degree or certificate program, transfer, or continued enrollment. Data were collected through surveys mailed to the director of child care at each SUNY community college having operational child care services, and distributed to student-parents using the services. Responses were received from 24 SUNY community colleges and 501 student-parents. Study findings included the following: (1) 60.9% of the student-parents were between 21 and 30 years of age, 95.7% were female, and 67.5% were unemployed; (2) 81.6% of the student-parents credited child care availability as a very important factor in their decision to enroll, while 59.7% stated that they would not be able to continue without the service; (3) 88.9% identified supplemental benefits received from the child care services, including the opportunity to meet other student-parents and help with parental problems; (4) the success rate of student-parents was more than 26 percentage points greater than the general student population; (5) 87% of the respondents with incomes of less than $15,000 identified child care as important to their decision to pursue higher education; and (6) 98% gave positive responses regarding the quality of care and concern shown by the child care staff. The survey instruments are appended. (Author/JMC)

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IMPACT OF CAMPUS-BASED CHILD CARE ON THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENT-PARENTS AT SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Prepared for

Office of Community Colleges
State University of New York Central Administration

by

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication reports the outcomes of a study undertaken by the Two-Year College Development Center, University at Albany, for the Office of Community Colleges, State University of New York. We want to acknowledge the participation of staff and students from Adirondack, Broome, Cayuga County, Columbia-Greeene, Community College of the Finger Lakes, Corning, Dutchess, Erie, Fulton-Montgomery, Genesee, Hudson Valley, Jamestown, Mohawk Valley, Nassau, Niagara County, North Country, Onondaga, Rockland, Schenectady County, Suffolk County, Sullivan County, Tompkins-Cortland, Ulster County and Westchester Community Colleges. Completion of the research would not have been possible without the cooperation of directors of campus-based child care and the student-parents who use child care services at these colleges. The information and perspectives that they shared provide strong evidence of the importance of campus-based child care to student-parents in SUNY community colleges.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this study was campus-based child care services provided by SUNY community colleges to student-parents pursuing their education. The primary goal was to determine the relationship of these campus-based child care services to enrollment and persistence of student-parents, or in other words, to academic success. For the purposes of this study, academic success was defined as completion of a degree/certificate program, transfer, or continued enrollment. Data were collected through mail surveys distributed to the director at each SUNY community college having operational child care services. Two questionnaires were used, one designed for the director and a second for student-parents. Responses were received from 24 SUNY community colleges (88.9% response rate) and usable responses from 501 student-parents using child care services at those colleges during 1987-88 (44.5% of the estimated population). This response rate provided an adequate database for observations and judgments to be made.

- The data provide conclusive evidence of a strong relationship between the existence of campus-based child care services and academic success of student-parents. More than 80% credited child care availability as a very important factor in their decision to enroll. Almost 60% indicated that continued college enrollment would not be possible without campus-based child care services. More than 46% of student-parents identified campus child care as a first priority factor that facilitated their attending college, and an additional 29.5% identified child care as a second priority factor. Campus-based child care not only promotes initial consideration and the decision to undertake an education by student-parents but also plays a critical role in continued enrollment decisions.

- In addition to actual care of children, approximately 90% of student-parents identified supplemental benefits received from campus-based child care services. These benefits ranged from helpful social interaction with peers to the role of center staff serving in an advisory capacity, providing help in parenting problems and generally serving as a "home base." The quality of child care was also heralded by student-parents as a positive, challenging and educational atmosphere that exceeded their expectations. Campus-based child care not only provides a service that permits these student-parents to pursue an education with "peace-of-mind" allowing necessary academic concentration but also contributes to the maturation and growth of their children at a level of quality not available in most non-campus alternatives.

- Once student-parents achieved academic success in their first semester, more than 26% indicated a subsequent increase in courseload. Regardless of courseload change, or whether in first or other semester, more than 80% rated campus-based child care as very important to their educational decisions.

- Student-parents achieved academic success to a significantly greater extent, approximately 20% greater, than the general student population at the institutions. During the period of 1985 through 1988, about 2,400 student-parents received child care services at the responding colleges. Of this number, more than 33% have received a degree, 30% are continuing their education, and more than 22% have transferred to another college. This results in 86.2% who are successful as defined for this study. In addition, almost 30% had received academic honors during the past academic year. In comparison, persistence data for the total student body at the responding colleges showed that of the more than 28,000 students entering in 1983, 32.2% had received a degree or certificate three years later in 1986; 10.7% continued enrollment and 16.7% had transferred, or 59.6% of the total student population were successful.

- More than 81% of student-parents aged 21-40 (95.1% of total sample) indicated that child care availability was critical to their decision to enroll. More than 87% of student-parents with annual incomes of less than $15,000 identified child care as important to their decision to pursue higher education. Female student-parents constituted 96.2% of the sample which underscores child care as an issue for women seeking to upgrade their economic well-being through education.

- An overwhelming majority (98%) of student-parents were laudatory in their comments regarding quality of care and concern shown by child care staff. Any recommendations given were positive and underscored the need for expanded services while simultaneously recognizing the benefits and contributions that campus-based child care was making to their education.

In summary, the results of this study present strong evidence of the crucial nature of campus-based child care for current and future student-parents who pursue their education in SUNY community colleges. Campus-based child care availability is not only necessary for initial consideration of enrollment but also contributes strongly to continued achievement of academic success. Student-parents as scholars persist and achieve success at a significantly greater rate than the general college population.

The positive relationship between academic success and existence of campus-based child care has direct economic implications. Without child care, many of these adults who are parents, usually female, often underemployed or unemployed, and between 20 to 40 years of age would not be able to pursue a community college education. When such individuals are not able to qualify for more productive fulfilling employment opportunities, they remain underutilized resources in their communities.

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IMPACT OF CAMPUS-BASED CHILD CARE ON THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENT-PARENTS AT SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGES

INTRODUCTION

Nationwide female enrollments at two-year colleges have grown from about 40% in 1970 to over 53% in 1987.[1] In 1986 female student enrollment was reported as 13.6% higher than that of males.[2] Although a majority of women students are under 30 years of age, an increasing number of older women return to college to become employable, learn new skills, upgrade current skills, or change career directions. On many campuses, special programs and support services have been created for special student groups in recognition of access problems that may be faced by these individuals. For single parents and/or women with dependent children, the financial burden of child care services coupled with a shortage of appropriate and quality child care alternatives is recognized as an obstacle that often can prevent participation in higher education. As the community college population changes to include even greater numbers of parents, married or single, of both genders, the need for quality child care increases proportionately.

Legislative and policy activities at both national and state levels are evidence of the current priority for child care services. Recently Governor Mario M. Cuomo declared 1988 as the beginning of the

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[1] A Summary of Selected National Data Pertaining to Community, Junior and Technical Colleges. Appendix for AACJC Statistical Yearbook 1988, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington, D.C., 1988.

[2] Fall Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions: National Estimates for Fall 1987 and Reported Data for Fall 1986, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, October 1988.

Decade of the Child. In so doing, this recognition of today's children as tomorrow's leaders underscores the need of assurances by all levels of government that the welfare of children will remain a priority. Adequate child care opportunities are part of that assurance as they enable parents to become self-sufficient and productive contributors to the economy.[3]

As long ago as a decade, local child care needs assessments and efforts to provide services were underway at SUNY community colleges. This concern has led to the provision of State aid for child care at these institutions. In 1985-86, the State allocation for community college child care was $500,000; in 1986-87 $575,000; in 1987-88 and 1988-89 $1,065,000. Initially in 1985-86, 22 colleges requested approximately $750,000 as compared to 28 colleges requesting more than $1.8 million in 1988-89. This support is designed to help offset non-personnel expenses and provide child care services to student-parents enrolled in the community colleges.

Funding of child care at community colleges comes from a variety of sources other than the State. During 1988-89, it is estimated that almost $3 million will come from non-state sources. The largest non-state source are the fees paid by student-parents which will account for about $1.5 million this year. Other sources include college funds, federal grants (usually VEA), student government funds, USDA nutrition funds, private fundraising, faculty-student associations, and the United Way. Community colleges generally exceed the State requirement of a 35%

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[3] Day Care: The Commitment in New York State, New York State Department of Social Services, Publication #1120, 1988.

match from non-state resources in order to qualify for State funds.

While allocations to colleges is a responsibility of the Office of Community Colleges, a statewide committee with representatives of child care center directors, student-parents, and SUNY staff review requests and make funding recommendations. The committee has established that funds should go to existing centers and start-up efforts with an emphasis on help for renovation, expansion, building, and/or buying needed equipment. Minimal amounts have been allocated for operating funds. Each college is viewed individually, not on a formula basis, with special attention given to current services and nature of the request in terms of the local amount of funds available.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In the fall of 1988, the Two-Year College Development Center, University at Albany, in cooperation with the Office of Community Colleges, undertook a study of the child care centers/services based in SUNY community colleges. The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship of campus-based child care to enrollment and persistence or retention of student-parents. Stated another way, the study sought to determine the impact of campus child care on the academic success of student-parents. Academic success is defined in this study as a) receiving a degree/certificate, b) transferring to another college, or c) continuing enrollment.

The primary data collection technique was a mail survey consisting of questionnaires for student-parents and for directors of the child care centers. Prior to statewide distribution, the instruments were

field-tested by staff and student-parents of the Hudson Valley Community College Child Care Center. Revisions were based on feedback received from the field-test.

The instrument designed for the director of child care services sought information about numbers served, characteristics and persistence of student-parents, and perspectives of selected program factors. The questionnaire designed for student-parents sought data on demographics, educational goals, use of services, perceived importance and benefits regarding the child care center, plus other information not currently available from centralized sources. The two questionnaires constitute Appendix A of this document.

The director survey and multiple copies (in numbers equivalent to SUNY estimates) of the student-parent form were mailed to the directors with informational copies to the college president at the 27 SUNY community colleges with currently operational child care centers/services. The cover letter requested that the director survey be completed, and that student-parent forms be distributed to all using child care services, and after completion and collection, be returned in a batch by the end of October 1988. To assure anonymity of student-parent responses, envelopes were provided and signatures requested across the flap once sealed. All sealed envelopes with student-parent responses and completed director forms were received by the Two-Year College Development Center for tabulation and analyses.

After follow-up requests, completed forms were received from 24 SUNY community colleges, a response rate of 88.9%. Of 1,127 student-parents reported as served during 1987-88, usable responses were received from 501, or slightly less than half of the student-parent

population. While the goal of survey research is always 100%, experience indicates that this response rate provides an adequate database from which valid judgments and observations can be made.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: STUDENT-PARENT DATA

Student-Parent Demographics. Responding student-parents represented a broad age span. The greatest number (60.9%) fell into the 21 to 30 age range, followed by the 31 to 40 age range (33.9%). More than 95% of the respondents were female. Almost half were married; more than 30% separated, divorced or widowed; and 20% single.

Family income ranged from less than $5,000 to more than $25,000. Both the minimum (<$5,000) and maximum ($25,000+) categories include about 27% of the respondents. Another 28% had incomes between $5,000 and $15,000 and the remaining 15% fell into the $15,000-$25,000 range. Approximately one-third of the student-parents are employed, most on a part-time basis.

Figure I provides additional demographic details.

Figure I

SUMMARY: SELECTED STUDENT-PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age:	20 & under	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	Over 60	No Response
	3.4%	60.9%	33.9%	1.6%	-	-	.4%
Gender:	Female	Male	No Response				
	95.7%	4.1%	.2%				
Marital Status:	Single	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Other	No Response
	20.8%	47.1%	13.0%	17.0%	1.4%	.4%	.6%
Family Income Level:	<$5,000	$5,000-$9,999	$10,000-$14,999	$15,000-$19,999	$20,000-$24,999	$25,000 & over	
	27.5%	18.8%	10.0%	6.6%	7.8%	26.3%	
Employment Status:	Currently Employed	Not Currently Employed	No Response				
	31.7%	67.5%	.8%				
-- Extent of employment:	7.6% full-time	68.5% no response					
	23.9% part-time						
-- Hours:	10 hours per week	5.2%					
	10-19 hours per week	9.8%					
	20+ hours per week	12.6%					

N = 501 student-parents; 24 community colleges
Due to rounding and missing data, percentages may not equal 100%.

Educational Status. As shown in Figure II, a majority of student-parents are enrolled as full-time students (65.8%). More than half of these respondents indicated that their primary reason for enrolling in college was to obtain an associate degree. About 25% specified their reason as acquiring course work necessary to transfer to a four-year college. The curricular areas in which the largest number were enrolled include Business and Commerce (29.0%), followed closely by Health Services and Paramedical Technologies (27.2%), and Liberal Arts and Sciences (17.0%). The remaining 26.8% were enrolled in a variety of other program areas or did not respond.

Specific programs represent the range of programs offered by SUNY community colleges. The greatest number were enrolled in Nursing (24%), followed by Office Technologies/Word/Information Processing (9.1%), Business Administration and Marketing (8.7%), General Studies (6.2%), Accounting (5.8%), Education--Art, Elementary, Early Childhood (5.6%), Computer Sciences (2.5%), Travel and Tourism (2.3%) and Lab/Med Technologies (2.1%). Other programs were identified by fewer than 2% of the respondents.

More than 28% were in their first semester of enrollment. Of those beyond their first semester, more than 33% indicated that their courseload had increased after their first semester, about 10% indicated a decrease, and more than 24% had no change. Approximately one-third indicated prior college experience at another institution with more than 6% receiving a previous degree. Although 75% of student-parents indicated that they had not changed their area of study since enrolling at the current community college, more than 21% had done so.

Figure II

SUMMARY: STUDENT-PARENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS

	Full-time	Part-time	Other	No response
College Enrollment Status:	65.8%	30.6%	2.6%	1.0%

Primary Reason for this College Enrollment:

Obtain an associate degree	52.0%
Take courses needed for transfer to 4-year college	23.5%
Complete vocational/technical program	6.0%
Obtain, maintain certification	4.1%
Take job-related required courses	2.9%
Take courses for self-improvement	2.3%
Take courses needed for transfer to another 2-year college	1.9%
No definite purpose	.2%
Other	4.9%

Current Curricular Area:

Business/Commerce	29.0%
Health Services/Paramed. Tech.	27.2%
Liberal Arts and Sciences	17.0%
Data Processing	5.6%
Undecided/Undeclared	3.4%
Public Service	3.2%
Mechanical Engineering	2.8%
Natural Science	2.4%

Specific Programs (>2% frequency):

Nursing	24.0%
Office	9.1%
Bus Ad/Marketing	8.7%
General Studies	6.2%
Accounting	5.8%
Educ. related	5.6%
Computer Science	2.5%
Travel/Tourism	2.3%
Lab/Med Tech	2.1%

Change in Program at this College:	No	Yes	No response
	75.0%	21.4%	3.5%

Course Load Change after First Semester:	Increased	Decreased	No Change	In First Semester	No Response
	33.1%	9.4%	24.4%	28.5%	4.6%

Education Prior to this College Enrollment:	High School	BOCES	GED	College	No Response
	51.8%	3.7%	9.5%	32.6%	2.5%

Previous Credit Hours:	1-6	7-15	16-30	Over 30	Degree
	3.2%	4.1%	8.0%	11.9%	6.3%

N = 501 student-parents, 24 community colleges
Percentages may not equal 100% due to multiple responses and rounding.

Factors Facilitating College Attendance. Student-parents were asked to indicate the priority of selected factors that facilitated their college participation. As shown in Figure III, on-campus child

care was designated by 46.8% as the most important factor, and by 29.5% as a second priority. Opportunities for financial aid was selected by 30.9% as first priority and by 16.3% as second in importance. Class availability at convenient times was designated by more than 23% as a second priority, but 13.4% indicated that scheduling was the highest priority factor.

Figure III

PRIORITY OF FACTORS THAT FACILITATED COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

% of Respondents Indicating Priority #1		% of Respondents Indicating Priority #2
46.8%	Existence of on-campus child care	29.5%
30.9%	Opportunities for financial aid	16.3%
13.4%	Classes available at convenient times	23.7%
9.3%	Availability of funds/ resources from Social Services	8.7%
.6%	Availability of training/funding from JTPA	1.6%
.2%	Other	3.7%

N = 501
Percentages may not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

The Relationship of Campus-Based Child Care and Academic Success

Two questions were asked of the student-parents: how important was campus-based child care to their decision to enroll in college and how important was its availability to the decision to continue college enrollment? The responses are summarized in Figure IV.

More than 80% of the respondents rated the existence of campus-based child care as a very important factor in their decision to enroll. An additional 10.4% indicated that its existence was of some importance to their decision. In providing explanations of their ratings, almost 50% indicated that they would not even be able to consider attendance without campus-based care. Almost 15% pointed to the quality of care received because this becomes critical to a positive mental state and resultant functioning as both a successful student and parent.

Relative to the role of campus-based child care to continuing enrollment, almost 60% indicated that they could not continue their college programs without it. Given the absence of campus-based child care, about 25% felt they would continue and would find care at another center or with family.

Figure IV

SUMMARY: CAMPUS-BASED CHILD CARE
ROLES AND IMPORTANCE

	Very Important	Some Importance	Very Little Importance	No Response
Importance of Campus-Based Child Care to college enrollment decision:	81.6%	10.4%	5.8%	2.2%

	Could Not Attend Without	Appreciate Quality of Care	Could Not Find Other Care	Don't Really Need Campus Child Care	Other/ No Response
--Explanation:	48.8%	14.7%	14.3%	.8%	21.4%

continued...

Figure IV (continued)

Role of Campus-Based Child Care to decision to continue college:	Could Not Continue Without Campus Child Care	Would Find Child Care Elsewhere at an Off-Campus Facility
	59.7%	19.0%
	Family Would Provide Child Care	Has No Relationship to My Decision
	6.0%	5.8%
	Other	No Response
	7.2%	2.3%

N = 501
Percentages may not equal 100% due to multiple responses and rounding.

In response to an item that inquired about benefits beyond the care of their children approximately 90% of the student-parents indicated that they had received benefits in addition to direct child care. Many of those not acknowledging additional benefits were from the few colleges that currently provide child care services primarily through subsidies for use at other providers.

As shown in Figure V, the benefit identified most frequently was the opportunity to meet with other student-parents (40%). Willingness of staff to discuss personal problems was noted by more than 37% and help with parenting problems by almost 30%. Another 27% identified the center serving as home base and almost 24% the willingness of staff to act as advisors as benefits.

More than 29% gave reasons or other information regarding the benefits received. The explanations generally dealt with the positive

Figure V

SUMMARY: CAMPUS-BASED CHILD CARE
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS, USAGE AND FEE SOURCES

Benefits Received Beyond Child Care from Campus Centers:

Opportunity to meet other student-parents	40.0%
Willingness of staff to discuss my problems	37.7%
Help with parenting problems	29.5%
Center serves as a home base at the college	26.6%
Willingness of staff to act as an advisor	23.4%
A source of college information (such as financial aid, academic resources, etc.)	19.8%
Other	29.1%
No additional benefits	11.1%

Number of Children Enrolled in Campus Child Care Center:	1	2	3
	81.0%	17.9%	1.0%

	2 and under	3 & 4	5 & over	No Response
--Age Range:	23.8%	69.1%	6.5%	.6%

Source of Fee Payment to Child Care Center:	Self	Social Service	Financial Aid/Grants
	54.8%	22.5%	12.8%

Combination of Self, Financial Aid and Grants	Combination of Self, Social Service and Grant
5.6%	1.4%

Parents	No Response
.6%	2.3%

Extent of Use of Campus-Based Child Care:

1.0%	Less than 3 hours per week
17.5%	3 - 9 hours per week
25.4%	10 - 15 hours per week
55.9%	More than 15 hours per week

N = 501
Percentages may not equal 100% due to multiple responses and rounding.

response of their children toward campus child care center experiences, the stimulation and growth of offspring due to participation in child care, the opportunities provided student-parents to be readily available should contact be necessary, social interactions and sharing provided by the child care experiences, and a "peace-of-mind" and ability to concentrate that evolves because of proximity and quality of child care being received. Representative comments are subsequently listed:

- Am aware of how to be a better parent.
- Provides role models other than relatives.
- Prepares son for school (transition to kindergarten) through involvement in group activities.
- Peace of mind knowing my children are being well taken care of.
- My only child has learned to interact with other children his own age, social skills.
- I am better able to concentrate on my studies knowing that my daughter is getting such good care.
- Exceptional atmosphere - teachers warm, and children happy.
- Eliminates guilt about attending classes.
- New level of friendship because of quality time provided by center.
- Helps daughter improve speech as I am deaf.
- A source of additional information on funding for child care through Social Services.
- Given child more independence, self-assurance and security.
- Staff accommodates class schedule.

Most student-parents each have one child enrolled in the campus center (81%), and more than 17% have two children enrolled. About 70% of the children are three or four years of age and about 24% at two or under. The child care fees are paid by the individual in a majority of cases (54.8%). Social Services provided the fee for 22.5%, financial aid and grants 12.8%. Combinations of individual, financial aid, Social Service, grants and other resources accounted for the remaining 10%.

Almost 60% use campus-based child care services for more than 15 hours per week and more than 25% 10-15 hours. About 18% use the services 9 or fewer hours each week.

Another item asked student-parents whether or not they had dependent children in addition to those enrolled in campus-based child care and if so, what child care arrangements were being used. As shown in Figure VI, approximately 50% indicated that they had other children. Most of these children were in school but 13% indicated they used family, babysitters/housekeepers or other agency child care centers.

Figure VI

OTHER DEPENDENT CHILDREN NOT ENROLLED IN CAMPUS CHILD CARE CENTERS

Age Range:	4 and under	7.0%
	5 and older	44.7%
	0 or no response	48.3%
Number:	1	33.2%
	2	12.8%
	3	3.5%
	4	1.0%
	6 and 7	.4%
	0 or no response	49.1%
Other Child Care Arrangements:	In school	43.7%
	Family care	6.4%
	Babysitter/ Housekeeper/ YWCA	6.6%
	NA or no response	43.3%

N = 501

Relationships Among Selected Variables

Additional analyses were undertaken that involved comparisons and investigations of relationships among selected variables. This section summarizes the results of these analyses that provide additional meaning to the data.

A correlation (r=-.25) was found between income level and use of the child care center. Student-parents with higher incomes tended to use child care services less. A positive relationship (r=.28) was found

between income levels and age--older student-parents tended to have higher incomes. Income, therefore, becomes a factor influencing the extent campus-based child care services may be used, particularly by older student-parents.

As previously indicated, a large majority of student-parents expressed their educational goal as either to earn a degree or to transfer to a four-year college. Of the student-parents who had the primary goal of a degree, more than 59% indicated that they would not have been able to continue work toward the degree without the campus child care center. Similarly, of those with a goal of transfer, 64.9% indicated the necessity of campus-based child care to continue. These responses reinforce the data presented earlier on the importance of child care to academic perseverance and success.

Figure VII

Primary Goal	Could Not Continue Without Campus Child Care	Would Find Child Care Elsewhere
To obtain degree	59.1%	20.2%
Courses to enable transferring	64.9%	21.9%

Previously, Figure IV detailed the responses of student-parents regarding the importance of campus-based child care to their initial decision to enroll as well as their decision to continue in college. The strength of the relationship between the responses to these items was analyzed using the Pearson correlational statistic and statistical significance was found at the .01 level. A comparison of the responses

to these two questions was also performed seeking a more in-depth explanation of the relationship of the responses. Figure VIII summarizes these data. Of those who rated campus-based child care as very important to their enrollment decision, 71% indicated that they could not continue without it as compared to about 19% who indicated that child care would be found elsewhere. Less than 3% said it had no relationship to their continuance.

Of those rating the existence of campus care as somewhat important to their enrollment decision, 11.8% responded that they could not continue, 11.8% saw no relationship to their college decision, and 66.7% indicated that they would find child care elsewhere.

Of those rating college-based child care as having little importance to their enrollment decision, more than 48% also indicated that it has no relationship to their decision to continue, 34.5% responded that child care would be found elsewhere. It should be noted that the proportion of the sample rating the importance of campus-based child care to enrollment as less than very important totaled 80 respondents as compared to 396 respondents who rated it as very important.

Figure VIII

	Impact on Decision to Continue in College:			
Importance of campus child care to enrollment decision	No Relationship to Decision	Could Not Continue Without Campus Child Care	Would Find Child Care Elsewhere	Other Responses
Very Important (N=396)	2.8%	71.0%	19.1%	6.6%
Some Importance (N=51)	11.8%	11.8%	66.7%	9.8%
Little Importance (N=29)	48.3%	6.9%	34.5%	10.3%

Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

It has been reported by some center directors that after an individual student-parent experiences academic success, a change in courseload may occur. The responses (Figure II) were analyzed in relation to the perceived importance of child care. Figure IX summarizes these data. Regardless of any courseload change, or whether in their first or other semester, more than 80% of each group rated campus-based child care as very important to their educational decisions.

Figure IX

COURSE LOAD CHANGE AFTER FIRST SEMESTER AS RELATED TO IMPORTANCE OF CAMPUS CHILD CARE

	N	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Little Importance
Load Increase	131 (26.8%)	80.9%	11.7%	6.8%
Load Decrease	39 (8.1%)	84.8%	13.0%	2.2%
No Change	96 (19.8%)	80.7%	9.2%	8.4%
In First Semester	117 (24.1%)	86.7%	8.9%	4.4%

Percentages may not total 100% due to missing data and rounding.

Demographics and Perceived Role of Campus-Based Child Care. Student-parents aged 21 through 40 represent approximately 95% of the sample (95.1%). Within this segment of the sample, 81.8% indicated that the existence of campus-based child care was very important to their initial decision to enroll.

Student-parents with less than $15,000 income represent 57.9% of the total sample. Within this portion of the sample, 87.5% indicated that the existence of campus-based child care was very important to their decision to pursue higher education. Of those reporting an income

of more than $15,000, 73.5% also rated child care as very important. It should be noted that reported income levels result in a bimodal distribution since annual incomes of less than $5,000 and of more than $25,000 are each reported by about 27%.

Full-time students make up 65.8% of the total sample. Of this segment, 85.2% indicated that the existence of campus child care was critical to their decision to pursue higher education. More than 77% (77.9%) of part-time students (30.9% of total sample), also indicated the critical importance of campus-based child care to continuing their education.

Child Care Recommendations by Student-Parents

Responding student-parents were asked to make appropriate recommendations for improving campus-based child care. An overwhelming majority (98%) were laudatory and praiseworthy, particularly regarding the quality of care and the concern shown by child care staff. Any recommendations given were positive and underscored the need for expanded child care while simultaneously recognizing the benefits and contributions that campus-based child care is making to their education. Suggestions that were given usually dealt with an extension of hours, expansion of services, a more convenient location, increased resources so that more full-time rather than part-time staff could be hired, changes in the fee schedule and/or payment regulations particularly regarding sick children, or adjustments in operational procedures such as nap times and types of food. Representative comments include the following:

- A wonderful blessing.
- Broadens childrens' horizons.

- My child has grown emotionally and developmentally since beginning the day care program here.

- The child care center is providing an accurate, supportive, educational environment for my child.

- I can relax knowing that my children are in good hands and being taught at the same time that I am.

- Completely satisfied.

- Stimulating, loving, educational place for my child to be while I attend college.

- I am very pleased with the child care center; my son really enjoys his time there; the teachers are very attentive to the needs of the children.

- Program is a valuable source of introducing a young child to a social group and is incredibly convenient.

- Very pleased with the center; my daughter enjoys being there and the staff is excellent.

- Staff has given my son a positive experience with school.

- Gives my child a secure feeling and acceptance of my absence with a positive attitude.

- The staff and child care center are excellent; my child is very content; the staff made his transition from home care to day care very comfortable.

- Quality care, visitations possible.

- Center is everything I want for my child.

- Excellently structured, orderly, colorful environment; children are really loved by the center staff.

- My daughter enjoys the center, and a child's approval is the best recommendation.

- Attention provided by the staff helps my children grow socially and academically.

Negative comments were offered by less than 2% of respondents and were often linked to a particular situation or incident.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: DIRECTOR DATA

The directors of SUNY community college child care centers were asked for information related to administrative placement, enrollments and persistence of student-parents. If the center did not have the requested data, the director was asked to seek assistance from the registrar or appropriate college staff member.

Administrative Placement of Campus-Based Child Care Services. In order to determine the administrative placement of child care, directors were asked whether or not there was an operational link to an academic program. More than 65% identified linkages, usually through student internships, with academic departments. The program area identified most frequently was Human Service, in particular, the programs of Child Development or Early Childhood. Other academic programs in which students may participate in child care activities were identified as Conservation, Nursing, Recreational Leadership, Nutrition, Food Service, Child Psychology, Recreational Therapy, and Psychology.

The directors shared the administrative structure for on-campus child care by indicating to which office it reported directly. More than 39.2% indicated that child care was part of the local Faculty Student Association, 34.8% reported to the Dean/Chief Student Personnel Officer, 8.7% to the Dean/Chief Academic Officer, 8.7% to the Community Education Director, 4.3% to a specific academic department (Early Childhood), and 4.3% through an outside agency. In instances where child care was part of FSA, about one-third indicated that the Student Affairs Officer was part of its governing board.

Enrollment Information. Based on the time frame of 1987-1988, directors were asked to provide the total number of student-parents

served, their age range, gender and frequency of support from Social Service. Figure X summarizes these data.

Figure X

1987-1988 PROFILE

Total number of student-parents served	1,127
Range of number served	17 - 144
Female student-parents served	96.2%
Male student-parents served	3.8%
Single student-parents served	36.4%
Student-parents receiving assistance from Social Services (N=17)	32.0%
Age range of student-parents	18 - 45 years

More than 1,000 student-parents were served during 1987-1988 in numbers at individual campuses that ranged from 17 through 144. More than 96% were females, and more than 3% males. About 36% were single student-parents and 32% received Social Service assistance.

Persistence Information. Directors were also asked to provide data regarding persistence during the three-year period of 1985-1988. Figure XI summarizes these data.

Figure XI

1985-1988 STUDENT-PARENT PERSISTENCE PROFILE

Total number of student-parents served	2,364
Percentage of student-parents receiving degree/certificate	33.4%
Percentage of student-parents continuing enrollment	30.0%
Percentage of student-parents that transferred to another college	22.8%
Total percent of successful student-parents (graduated, transferred or are continuing enrollment)	86.2%
Mean percentage of student-parents receiving academic honors in 1987-88 (N = 16 colleges) range reported 5% ---> 62%	29.4%

The 24 responding colleges (during the designated time period or since the initiation of child care services at the respective college) indicated the total number of student-parents served as 2,364. Of this number, 33.4% had received a degree or certificate, 30% are continuing enrollment, and 22.8% have transferred to another, usually a four-year college. These data indicate that 86.2% of student-parents served by SUNY community college child care centers since 1985 have achieved academic success as defined for this study (graduated, transferred, or continued enrollment).

Data were also requested regarding the percent of student-parents who received academic honors during the 1987-1988 academic year. Based on information provided, the mean percentage of student-parents receiving academic honors was 29.4%. The range was from 5% to 62%.

As a basis of comparison, the persistence of the general student population for the responding colleges is profiled in Figure XII. The data are based on 1983 entrants to the SUNY community colleges, the latest figures available for a three-year period, as reported by the State University of New York Office of Institutional Research.

Figure XII

1983 ENTRANCE PERSISTENCE PROFILE: TOTAL STUDENT BODY AT RESPONDING COLLEGES[1] (N = 24)

Total number of students	28,152
Percentage of students receiving degree/certificate	32.2%
Percentage of students continuing enrollment	10.7%
Percentage of students that transferred to another college	16.7%
Total percent of successful students (graduated, transferred, continuing)	59.6%

[1] As reported for 1986 in Attrition and Retention of Full-Time, First-Time, Transfer Students in Baccalaureate and Associate Degree Programs, Including Postsecondary Opportunity Students (1983). State University of New York, Office of Institutional Research Report No. 4-87A, September 1987.

Persistence data were selected for the total student body at the 24 responding SUNY community colleges to assure a valid comparison. At these colleges, more than 28,000 students entered in 1983. Three years later in 1986, 32.2% had received a degree or certificate; 10.7% continued enrollment and 16.7% had transferred to another college. The total percent of successful (as defined for the purposes of this study) students within the total college population is 59.6%. As indicated previously, the success rate for student-parents is more than 26 percentage points greater than the general student population.

Because transfer data were not available for all 24 colleges in the report, the eight colleges, for which the transfer information was not available, were dropped for the second comparison detailed in Figure XIII.

Figure XIII

1983 PERSISTENCE PROFILE: TOTAL STUDENT BODY AT RESPONDING COLLEGES PROVIDING TRANSFER INFORMATION (N =16)[1]

Total number of students	20,885
Percentage of students receiving degree/certificate	33.4%
Percentage of students continuing enrollment	11.3%
Percentage of students that transferred to another college	22.4%
Total percent of successful students	67.1%

[1] As reported for 1986 in Attrition and Retention of Full-Time, First-Time, Transfer Students in Baccalaureate and Associate Degree Programs, Including Postsecondary Opportunity Students (1983). State University of New York, Office of Institutional Research Report No. 4-87A, September 1987.

For these colleges, the total number of entrants in 1983 was more than 20,000, and in 1986 33.4% had received a degree or certificate, 11.3% continued enrollment and 22.4% transferred to another college. The total percent of successful students is 67.1%, more than 19 percentage points less than the persistence rate of student-parents at the same colleges. In both instances, the rate of success of student-parents is significantly greater than for the total student population at responding colleges.

Director Observations. Based on their experiences, directors were asked to rate the extent to which campus-based child care contributed to a) initial enrollment of student-parents and b) retention of student-parents. As shown in Figure XIV, almost 40% felt that child care contributed greatly to initial enrollment. The impact on retention was perceived to be greater with 66.7% indicating "very much."

Explanatory comments shared by directors included observations that child care is being used by increasing numbers of new students. Others noted feedback from student-parents indicating that many would not have considered enrollment if child care had not been available. Regarding retention, directors perceive that affordability, accessibility and quality of their programs facilitate successful performance as students. Reduced worry and concern about their children, its convenience, and affordability are viewed as critical to student persistence.

Figure XIV

EXTENT THAT CHILD CARE CENTER IS PERCEIVED TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO INITIAL ENROLLMENT OF STUDENT-PARENTS

Very Much				Very Little
5	4	3	2	1
39.1%	26.2%	30.4%	-	4.3%

EXTENT THAT CHILD CARE CENTER IS PERCEIVED TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO RETENTION OF STUDENT-PARENTS

Very Much				Very Little
5	4	3	2	1
66.7%	28.6%	-	-	4.7%

N = 24 colleges

Alternate types of child care used most frequently by student-parents were identified by directors as private or other agency day care centers, family care, home caregivers, and relatives. These responses generally reflect those given by the student-parents to a similar question. Additional comments provided by directors usually focused on results of local assessments, concerns for funding support, and sharing of informal information or anecdotes about student-parents.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

This research focused on campus-based child care provided by SUNY community colleges to student-parents pursuing their education. The primary goal of this study was to determine the relationship of campus-based child care services to the enrollment and persistence of student-parents, or in other words, to academic success. For the purposes of this study, academic success was defined as completion of the degree/certificate program, transfer or continued enrollment. Data were

collected through mail surveys distributed to the director at each SUNY community college having operational child care services. Two questionnaires were used: one designed for the director and a second for student-parents. Responses were received from 24 SUNY community colleges (88.9% response rate) and usable responses from 501 student-parents using child care services at those colleges during 1987-88 (44.5% of the estimated population).

The sample is generally made up of married females, between 21 and 30 years of age, with an annual family income of less than $15,000, and not currently employed unless on a part-time basis.

The primary reason for college attendance is the acquisition of an associate degree/or certificate. Enrollment is usually full-time, often in a business/commerce or allied health program area.

A strong relationship was found to exist between campus-based child care and academic success for the student-parents. More than 80% credited its existence as an important factor in their decision to enroll. Almost 60% indicated that continued college enrollment would not be possible without the existence of campus-based child care. Not only does child care facilitate the initial consideration and decision to undertake an education by student-parents but also serves as a priority factor regarding continued enrollment.

In addition to the actual care of children, approximately 90% identified additional benefits that were received from the campus-based service. The benefits ranged from helpful social interaction with peers to the role of center staff serving in an advisory capacity, providing help in parenting problems and generally being a "home base." The quality of child care was also heralded by student-parents as a

positive, challenging and educational atmosphere that reached beyond all expectations. It can be concluded that campus-based child care not only provides a service which allows the student-parent to pursue an education but also contributes to the maturation and growth of the children at a level of quality not available in most non-campus alternatives.

Very few student-parents (2%) offered recommendations for improvement of the campus-based child care. The overwhelming majority provided laudatory and praiseworthy comments, particularly regarding the quality of care and the concern given by staff. Any recommendations given were usually positive and essentially underscored a need for expansion of child care, and simultaneously recognized benefits and contributions that the campus-based child service was making to their own education.

Student-parents achieve academic success to a significantly greater extent, approximately 20% greater, than the general student population at the institutions. During the period of 1985 through 1988, a total of 2,364 student-parents were reported as served by the responding colleges. Of this number, more than 33% have received a degree, 30% are continuing their education, and more than 22% have transferred to another college. This results in 86.2% who are successful as defined for this study. In addition, almost 30% had received academic honors in the past academic year.

In summary, the results of this study present strong evidence of the critical nature of campus-based child care for current and future student-parents pursuing their education in SUNY community colleges. The existence of child care is not only necessary for many student-

parents to consider enrollment but also contributes strongly to continued achievement of academic success. Student-parents as scholars persist and achieve success at a significantly greater rate than the general college population.

The positive relationship between academic success and existence of campus-based child care has direct economic implications. Without child care, many of these adults who are parents, usually female, often underemployed or unemployed, and between 20 to 40 years of age would not be able to pursue a community college education. When such individuals are not able to qualify for more productive fulfilling employment opportunities, they remain underutilized resources in their communities.

SUNY Community College Child Care Study

APPENDIX A

CHILD CARE CENTER DIRECTOR/STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

College: _____

1a) Because of the prevalence of multiple funding sources, we are aware that a major task of a Child Care Center Director is the maintenance of records of expenditures and resources. Therefore, using records already prepared for the 1987-1988 academic year, please summarize the following information:

a) Number of student-parents served: _____

b) Percent of student-parents that are female: _____

c) Percent of student-parents that are single parents: _____

d) Percent that are recipients of support from Social Service: _____

e) Age range of student-parents: _____

b) Because of the widespread interest in the relationship of campus child care to retention, we are asking for your assistance in obtaining longitudinal information regarding student-parents who have used child care services. Depending on the scope of your evaluation and follow-up activities, the following information may be readily available or you may need to ask your registrar, institutional researcher or other appropriate office for the data. In most colleges, a listing of student parents and their Social Security numbers should provide access to the necessary records.

Request for longitudinal and/or retention information should be based on student-parents who used campus child care services during the period Fall 1985 - Spring 1988.

1) Total number of student-parents served 1985-88 (unduplicated) _____

2) What percent (or number) of these student-parent users graduated or completed a certificate program? _____

3) What percent (or number) of these student-parent users are still enrolled in college? _____

4) What percent (or number) of these student-parent users have transferred to another college? _____

2a) Is the child care center linked to an academic program of study?

____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please identify program and briefly summarize how Center benefits from these linkages: _____

_____

_____

b) How is the child care center administratively linked to the college, and to what office does the center report? _____

_____

_____

	Very Much		Moderate		Very Little
3a) To what extent do you believe the campus child care center contributed to the initial enrollment of student-parents at your college?	5	4	3	2	1

Please briefly explain. _____

_____

b) To what extent do you believe the campus child care service impacts retention of your student-parents? 5 4 3 2 1

Please briefly explain. _____

_____

c) In 1987-88 what percentage of your student-parents earned academic honors, such as Dean's List, President's List, or other? _____

How does this compare to the percentage of the total student body who earn similar honors? Percentage of student-parents is: ____higher
____about the same ____lower ____don't know

4) Are you aware of off-campus child care alternatives used most frequently by student-parents not using campus child care?

____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please identify, such as private day care center, extended family, etc.): _____

_____

5) Please add any other comments that relate to the impact of child care on recruitment and/or retention.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

* * * * * *

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please return as soon as possible but no later than October 28, 1988 to: Dr. LaVerna M. Fadale, Two-Year College Development Center, University at Albany, 135 Western Avenue, Draper 306, Albany, New York 12222.

SUNY Community College Child Care Study APPENDIX A

PARENT-STUDENT SURVEY

College: _____ Date: _____

Please check/respond as appropriate.

1a) Your age range:

_____ 20 and under
_____ 21 - 30
_____ 31 - 40
_____ 41 - 50
_____ 51 - 60
_____ over 60

b) Gender: _____ male _____ female

c) Your current marital status:

_____ Single
_____ Married
_____ Separated
_____ Divorced
_____ Widowed
_____ Other: _____

d) Of your dependent children, please indicate the age and number of children enrolled in the Campus Child Care Center. _____

e) Of your dependent children, please indicate the age and number who are not enrolled in the Campus Child Care Center. _____

What child care arrangements have been made for these children while you attend college (example: in school, family care, etc.)? _____

f) To what extent do you use the Campus Child Care Center?

_____ Less than three hours per week
_____ Three to nine hours per week
_____ 10 - 15 hours per week
_____ Over 15 hours per week

g) Family income level:

_____ under $5,000
_____ $5,000 - $9,999
_____ $10,000 - $14,999
_____ $15,000 - $19,999
_____ $20,000 - $24,999
_____ $25,000 and over

h) What is the source of your fee payment to the Campus Child Care Center? (Example: self, Social Services, etc.) _____

i) Are you currently employed?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, _____ full-time _____ part-time

_____ hours per week
_____ at various times (holiday, summer, etc.)

2a) What education did you complete before first enrolling in this community college?

_____ high school
_____ BOCES
_____ GED
_____ college

If college, how many credit hours did you complete?

_____

In what program of study? _____

b) What is your current enrollment status?

_____ full-time student
_____ part-time student taking _____ credit hours
_____ an occasional course
_____ other: _____

What is your typical class schedule?

_____ day classes for _____ days per week
_____ evening classes for _____ evenings per week
_____ combination of day and evening classes for _____ days, _____ evenings
_____ weekend classes

c) In what curriculum area are your currently enrolled?

_____ Business/Commerce
_____ Data Processing
_____ Fine & Applied Arts
_____ Health Services/Para-medical Technologies
_____ Mechanical & Engineering Tech.
_____ Natural Sciences
_____ Public Service
_____ Liberal Arts & Sciences
_____ Undeclared/undecided major

Please identify your specific program, such as accounting, humanities, nursing, general studies, etc.

_____

d) Has this been the only program area in which you've been enrolled at this community college? _____ Yes _____ No

If no, please identify previous program(s): _____

_____

e) Did your course load change after your first semester of enrollment?

_____ Yes
_____ increased
_____ decreased
_____ stayed same

_____ No

_____ This is my first semester.

3a) Which of the following statements best describes your primary reason for enrolling in the community college?

_____ No definite purpose in mind
_____ To take a few courses for self-improvement
_____ To take a few job-related or job-required courses
_____ To take courses necessary for transferring to another two-year college
_____ To take courses necessary for transferring to a four-year college or university
_____ To complete a vocational/technical program
_____ To obtain or maintain a certification
_____ To obtain an associate degree
_____ Other; please specify: _____

b) How important was the availability of child care on campus to your decision to enroll in college?

_____ Very important _____ Some importance _____ Very little importance

Please explain: _____

_____

c) If any of the following made it easier for you to attend college, please identify all that apply by numbering in order of importance, 1 = most important.

_____ Availability of funds and resources from Social Services
_____ Availability of training and funding opportunities from JTPA
_____ Existence of on-campus child care
_____ Opportunities for financial aid from the college
_____ Classes available at time I could attend
_____ Other; please specify: _____

d) How does the availability of campus child care affect your decision to continue or not to continue in college?

_____ It has no relationship to my decision.
_____ I could not continue without child care on campus.
_____ I would find child care elsewhere at an off-campus agency.
_____ I would have my family provide child care.
_____ Other; please specify: _____

e) If you feel you have received benefits from the child care center, in addition to child care, please check all that apply from the list below. (Check here if none _____.)

_____ Source of college information (such as financial aid, academic resources, staff members to call, etc.)
_____ Help with parenting problems
_____ Willingness of staff to discuss my problems
_____ Center serves as a home base for me at the college
_____ Willingness of staff to act as an advisor
_____ Opportunity to meet other student-parents
_____ Other(s); please specify: _____
_____
_____

4a) If you have recommendations for improving campus child care service, please describe briefly.

_____

_____

_____

b) Other comments: _____

_____

_____

To assure anonymity, put this completed questionnaire into the attached envelope, seal, sign as indicated and return to Child Care Center Director as requested.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Optional- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

The project may be selecting a sample of respondents for follow-up telephone interviews. If you are willing to be interviewed, if selected, please provide the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone: ( ) _____

Best hours to call: _____

- -

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